



Governor Ruth Ann Minner



January 24, 2008

To Members of the 144th General Assembly and to all Delawareans:

In compliance with 29 Del. C. Section 6335(a), I respectfully submit for your consideration the Fiscal Year 2009 Governor's Policy Overview and Operating Budget for the State of Delaware. The financial plan outlined here today continues to enhance the vision I set forth for Delaware. This vision continues to focus on improving public education, ensuring the health, safety and self-sufficiency of every Delaware family, expanding economic development opportunities, and creating a Livable Delaware that strengthens communities and preserves the quality of life for all Delawareans. The proposed operating budget of \$3,410.8 million represents an increase of 3.81 percent over the Fiscal Year 2008 Operating Budget. This budget supports my vision for Delaware and continues to build on the successes we have achieved during the Minner-Carney administration.

This financial plan was created with a watchful eye on the increasing uncertainty in the national economy. States across the country are feeling the impact of the national housing slump, rising energy costs, a tightening credit environment and a weakening national job market. Delaware has fared relatively well during this time of economic uncertainty through the consistent use of sound financial planning principles. I present to you today a strategy that balances the impact of the national economy while continuing to invest in my vision for Delaware.

The financial plan I am proposing appropriates 98 percent of available revenues and ensures core state government services are provided to all Delawareans. In support of my vision to improve education in Delaware, this budget provides for the continued expansion of the full-day Kindergarten initiative, funding for SEED scholarships and Vision 2015 initiatives, and provides an additional math specialist and reading resource teacher for new schools coming online this fiscal year. This budget also includes funding to enhance the health and safety of Delaware families by increasing the allotment of State Police troopers and by providing additional resources to address infant mortality and health disparities. Projected increases in public education enrollment, increases in juvenile justice system population growth and increases in Medicaid caseloads are also addressed in this budget. Most importantly, my recommended financial plan remains sustainable into the future without compromising the prudent financial principles that underlie our AAA bond ratings.

As Governor, my pledge is to manage the budget responsibly so we can live within our means, ensure that essential services are provided to all Delawareans in the most efficient manner possible, and strengthen our fiscal health. Though this budget may not meet every need or solve every problem, it is in keeping with the tradition of fiscal responsibility that Delaware has maintained for decades and helps to meet our goals.

In cooperation with the members of the 144th General Assembly, I look forward to implementing my Fiscal Year 2009 Recommended Budget.

Sincerely,

Ruth Ann Minner
Governor